

Positive Education at Mercedes College

Tanya Kadak & Marisa Trio

2015 SPAWA Conference



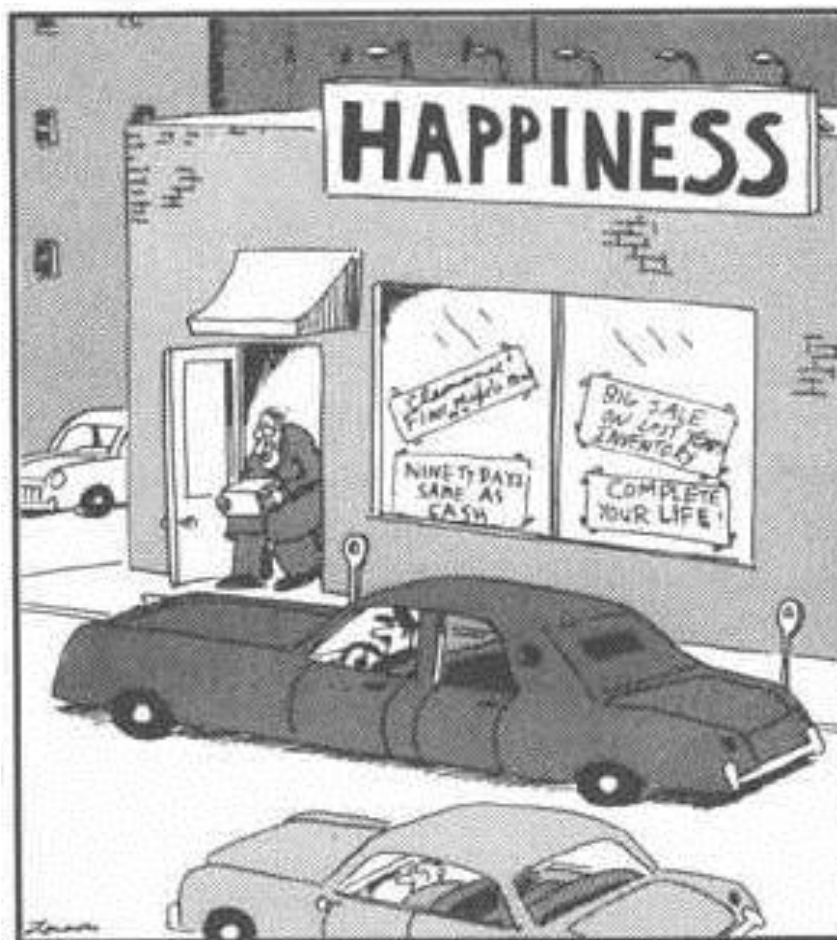
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ASPIRE EXCEL LEAD





His few friends had told him he could never buy it, but Mr. Crawley surmised that they just didn't know where the store was.





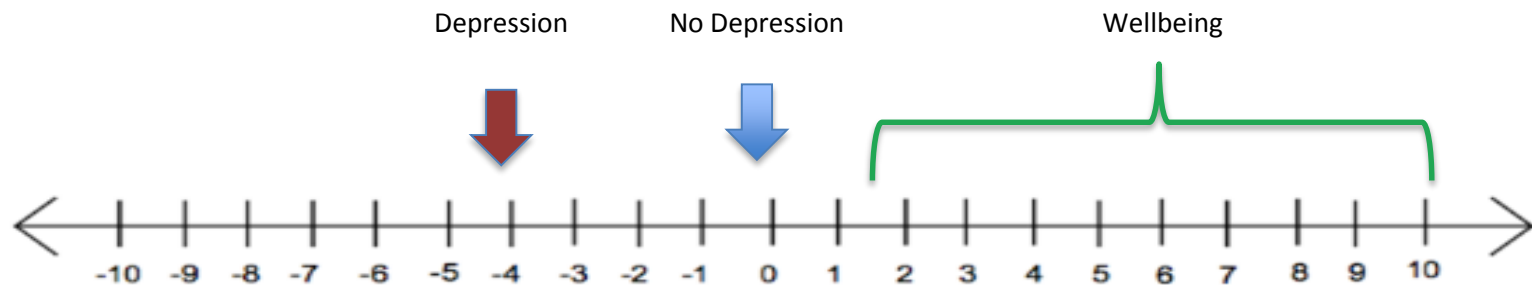
Positive Psychology

The scientific study into the factors that help individuals, communities and organisations thrive by building on their strengths and virtues.

(Peterson, 2008)

Positive Psychology

- Launched by Dr Martin Seligman (President of the American Psychological Association – 1998)
- Traditionally, Psychology uses a ‘medical model’ (what’s wrong – let’s fix it)
- Positive Psychology aims to increase wellbeing, not just decrease misery
- Absence of illness vs. presence of wellness





Flourishing

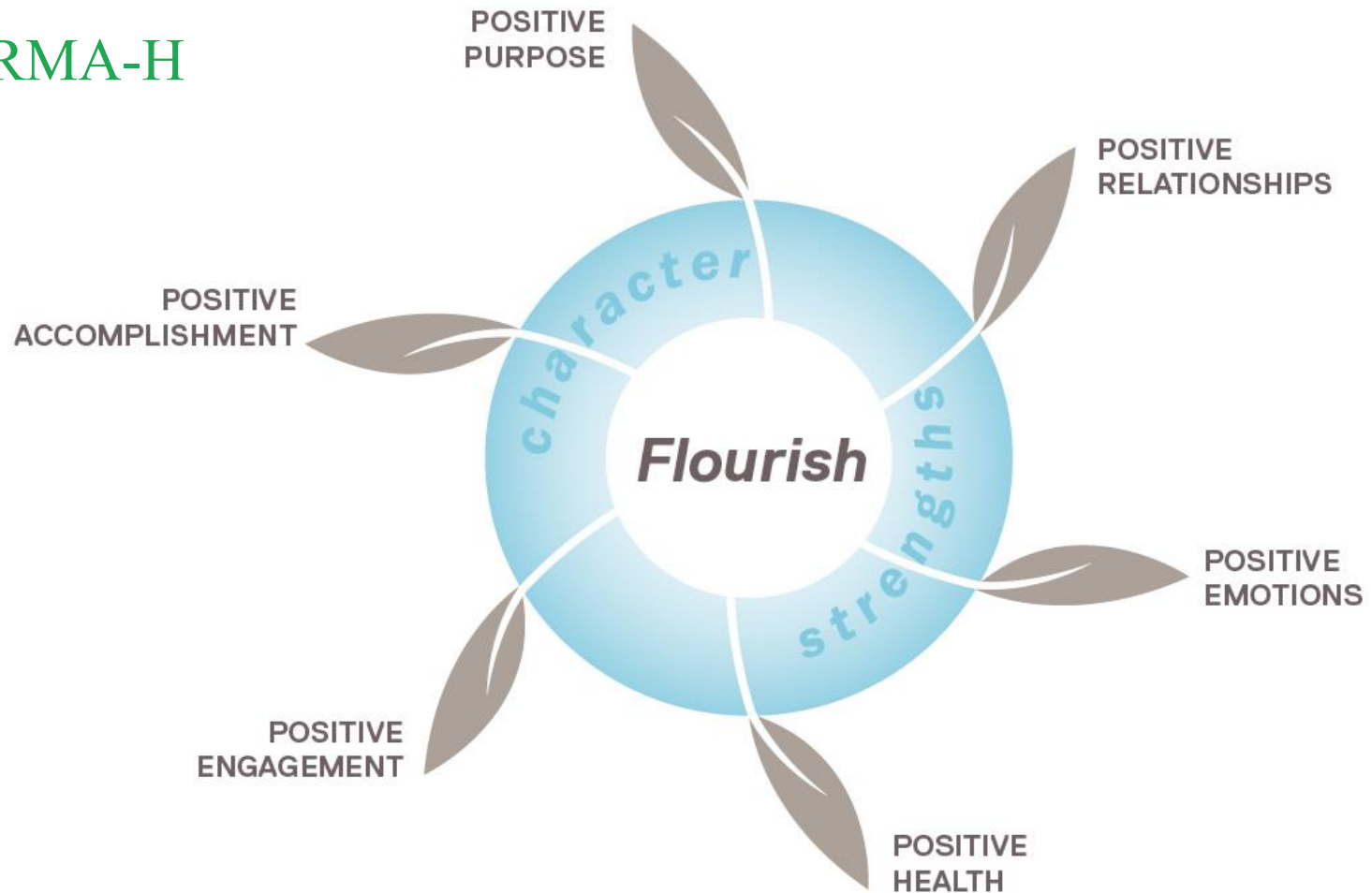
Flourishing refers to the experience of life going well.

It is a combination of feeling good and functioning effectively.

It is synonymous with a high level of mental **wellbeing** and it epitomises mental health.



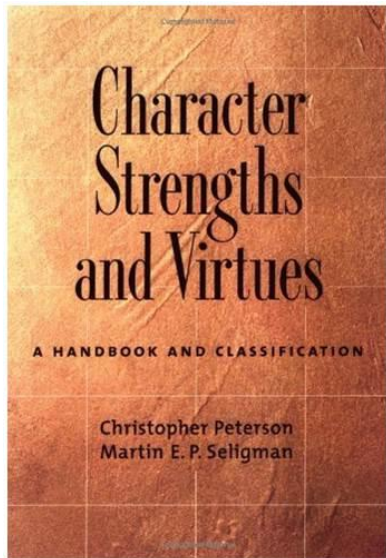
PERMA-H





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Creativity Perspective
Judgment Curiosity
Honesty Bravery Fairness
PERSEVERANCE HUMOR Zest
Teamwork
Love Kindness Leadership
Social Intelligence Love of Learning
Forgiveness HOPE PRUDENCE
Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence Humility
Spirituality SELF-REGULATION Gratitude
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Positive Education

Positive Education brings together the science of positive psychology with best practice teaching and learning to encourage and support schools and individuals within their communities to flourish. (GGS, 2011)

Education for both 'traditional' skills and **the skills for wellbeing.**



Positive Education at Mercedes College: A Whole School Approach

LEARN it, LIVE it, TEACH it, EMBED it

“Schools appear to perform relatively well in terms of providing resources and offering relevant programs, but are perhaps less successful in embedding these activities within an overarching mental health framework. These activities are less likely to be effective if they are conducted in relative isolation, and should be integral to the school’s ethos and environment and woven through its curriculum.”



Kutcher & Wei, 2012

Positive Education at Mercedes College

2013

- Four staff complete training with Prof. Lea Waters
- Establishment of Positive Education interest group
- Timeline for proposed roll-out developed



Implementation of Positive Education at Mercedes College

2014

- Timeline for proposed roll-out taken to Executive Council
- Staff complete VIA Character Strengths Survey
- 'Taster session' for teaching staff run by Positive Education Team
- Funding for more extensive training approved
- Re-establishment of Positive Education Team
- Four staff undertake four day training course at Geelong Grammar's Institute of Positive Education
- Flourish lessons introduced for Years 7-10 in the Pastoral Care Program based on two PERMAH concepts (Character Strengths and Positive Health)

Training at the Institute of Positive Education at Geelong Grammar



Training at the Institute of Positive Education at Geelong Grammar



Flourish Lessons



WHAT IS HAPPINESS & WELLBEING

- What does it feel like to be happy?
- What things (people, activities, thoughts) make you feel happy?
- What is wellbeing?



More pics on www.LeFunny.net

HOW MUCH SLEEP ARE YOU GETTING?

- The average sleep need for teenagers is around **9 HOURS**
- Changes in teenagers body chemistry results in a preference for going to sleep later at night.
- This results in teenagers becoming more and more sleep deprived from Monday to Friday and then sleeping in on the weekends.
- A shift in your body clock over the weekend makes getting up early on Monday very difficult and then being groggy for hours on a Monday morning.



SERENITY

As with Joy, you feel safe and secure, little effort is required on your part, but serenity is much more low key – it is a **mindful** state that makes you want to sit back and savour your current circumstances and find ways to make them happen more often. An ‘afterglow’ emotion, we often feel serene after experiencing other forms of positivity, like joy, pride, amusement or awe.

Geelong Grammar, 2014

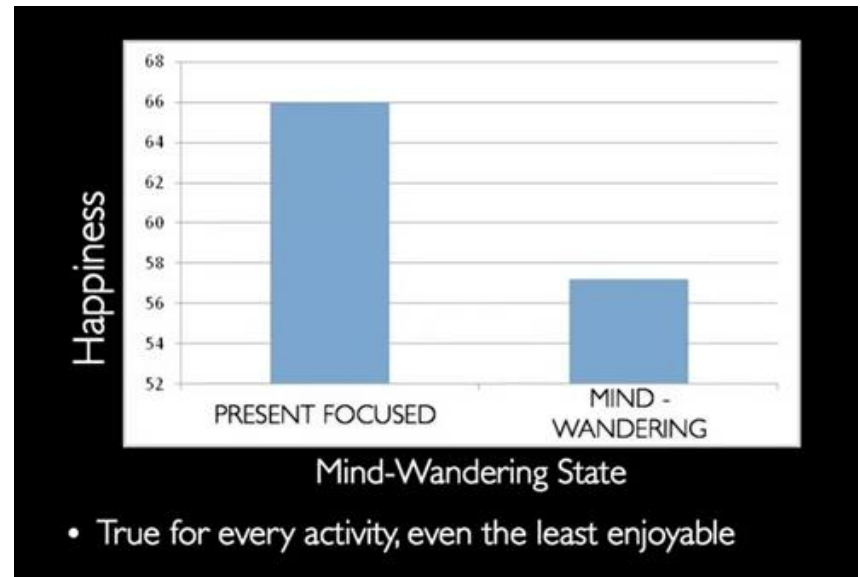
Think about the last time you savoured a serene moment.



BEING MINDFUL CAN BE DIFFICULT

47% of the time we are thinking about something other than what we are doing, i.e. Mind wandering

[Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010]



3. EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

ACTIVITY: Writing a Gratitude Letter

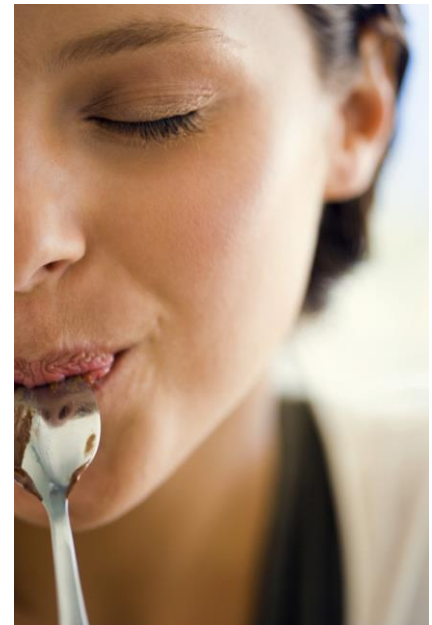


- ❖ Who would you like to write a gratitude letter to?
- ❖ What is it about that person that you are grateful for?
- ❖ Why are you thankful this person is in your life?
- ❖ How has this person impacted you?



SAVOURING

- To enjoy and appreciate something fully.
- To stop for a moment, and really enjoy what is going on and allow yourself to get totally immersed in an activity.
- Savouring fosters positive emotions and increases well-being.



ACTIVE CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONDING

HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO GOOD NEWS?



Implementation of Positive Education at Mercedes College

2015

- January: Whole staff formally introduced to the field of Positive Psychology in a one day PD conducted by staff from Geelong Grammar
- Positive Education Team presents to the teaching staff once a term, with focus on a different aspect of the PERMAH model at each Staff Forum
- Academic Council engaged to lead follow-up discussions and brainstorming sessions within their learning areas
- Flourish lessons continue
- Laura Allison (Director of Wellbeing at Sacred Heart College) presents to the Mercedes Leadership Team about Positive Education

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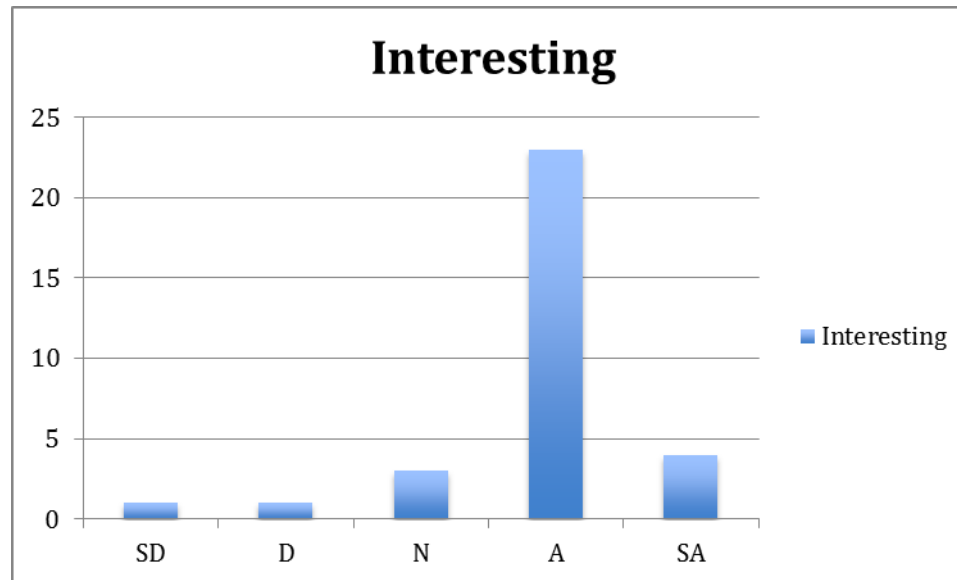
Positive Education Staff Forums

Teachers surveyed about Positive Education workshops delivered by the Positive Education Team



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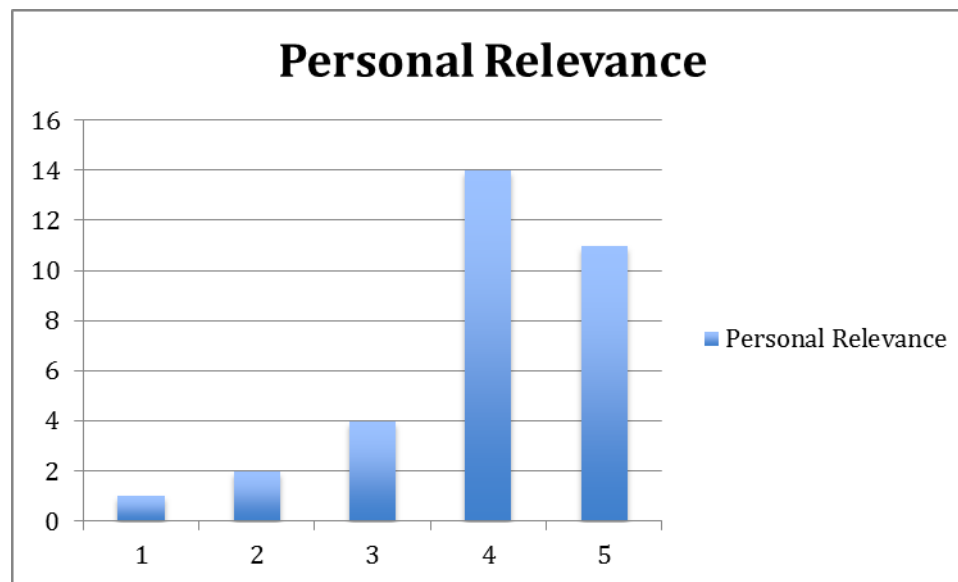
Staff survey results:



Summary = 84% of respondents 'agree'

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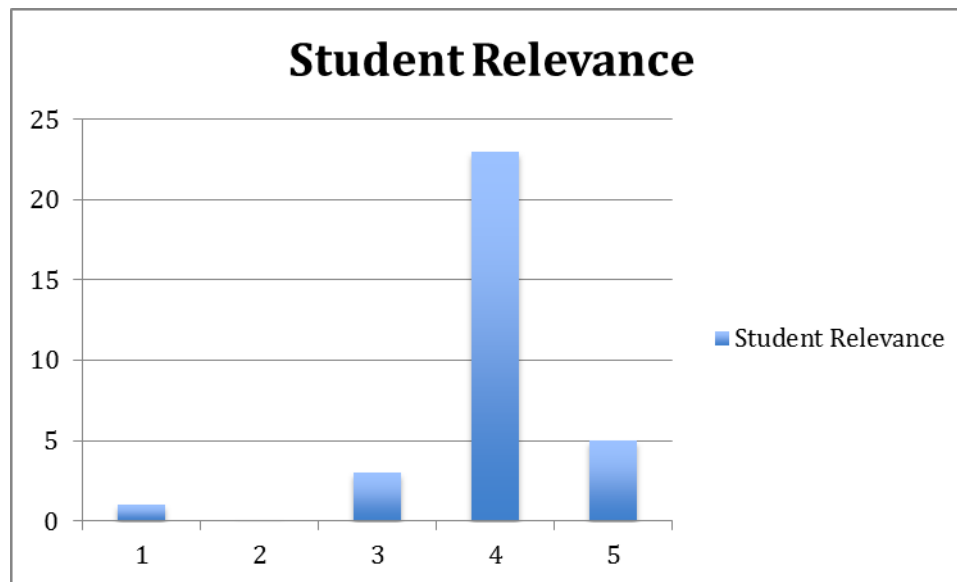
Staff survey results:



Summary = 78% of respondents 'agree'

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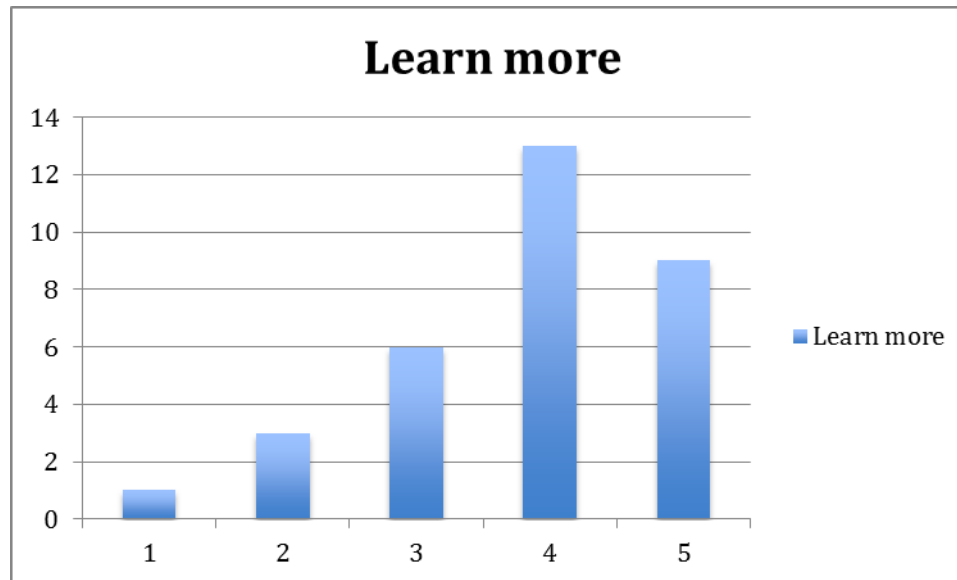
Staff survey results:



Summary = 88% of respondents 'agree'

Implementation of Positive Education at Mercedes College

Staff survey results:



Summary = 67% of respondents 'agree'

Implementation of Positive Education at Mercedes College

Next steps:

- School Vision Plan: Staff and student wellbeing is identified as one of six priority areas for the next five years
- Determining how and when to embed Positive Education in the classroom
- Looking at how we can embed Positive Education on our website, in our publications and newsletters and in our processes and documentation
- Investigation of staff wellbeing survey for next year: AWE
- Considering how we can inform our parents about Positive Education



Positive Education Initiatives at Mercedes:

- Gratitude board in staff room
- Positive Education concepts added to student diary
- Vital Staff newsletters sent by Principal
- Random Acts of Kindness activity for staff at Christmas and in student homerooms
- Learning personal Character Strengths
- Fostering positive relationships and opportunities for social interaction (Social committee/ morning teas)
- Cards with Happiness Tips sent to staff each week
- *Inviting* participation rather than pushing
- Sending staff to Positive Schools Conference and other training related to Positive Education



Challenges

- Change overload in schools
- “Not another program!”
- The need for Executive support
- Resourcing – financial and time
- Confusion with ‘being positive’
- Everyone is busy with their own core business
- It’s not for everyone!

But...anything you do, will help.



Patience...

Flowers only bloom when they are ready.

People are the same way.

You cannot rush or force them open
just because you think it's time.

Be patient.

—Timber Hawkeye

How to Make a Start!









Five simple things you could do now to start using ideas from the field of Positive Psychology in your school...



1: Discover your Character Strengths

VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues

The Character Strengths of a Flourishing Life

WISDOM	COURAGE	HUMANITY	JUSTICE	TEMPERANCE	TRANSCENDENCE
 <p>Creativity Originality; adaptive; ingenuity</p>	 <p>Bravery Valor; not shrinking from fear; speaking up for what's right</p>	 <p>Love Both loving and being loved; valuing close relations with others</p>	 <p>Teamwork Citizenship; social responsibility; loyalty</p>	 <p>Forgiveness Mercy; accepting others' shortcomings; giving people a second chance</p>	 <p>Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence Awe; wonder; elevation</p>
 <p>Curiosity Interest; novelty-seeking; exploration; openness to experience</p>	 <p>Perseverance Persistence; industry; finishing what one starts</p>	 <p>Kindness Generosity; nurturance; care; compassion; altruism; "niceness"</p>	 <p>Fairness Just; not letting feelings bias decisions about others</p>	 <p>Humility Modesty; letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves</p>	 <p>Gratitude Thankful for the good; expressing thanks; feeling blessed</p>
 <p>Judgment Critical thinking; thinking things through; open-minded</p>	 <p>Honesty Authenticity; integrity</p>	 <p>Social Intelligence Emotional intelligence; aware of the motives/feelings of self/others; knowing what makes other people tick</p>	 <p>Leadership Organizing group activities; encouraging a group to get things done</p>	 <p>Prudence Careful; cautious; not taking undue risks</p>	 <p>Hope Optimism; future-mindedness; future orientation</p>
 <p>Love of Learning Mastering new skills & topics; systematically adding to knowledge</p>	 <p>Zest Vitality; enthusiasm; vigor; energy; feeling alive and activated</p>			 <p>Self-Regulation Self-control; disciplined; managing impulses & emotions</p>	 <p>Humor Playfulness; bringing smiles to others; lighthearted</p>
 <p>Perspective Wisdom; providing wise counsel; taking the big picture view</p>					 <p>Spirituality Religiousness; faith; purpose; meaning</p>

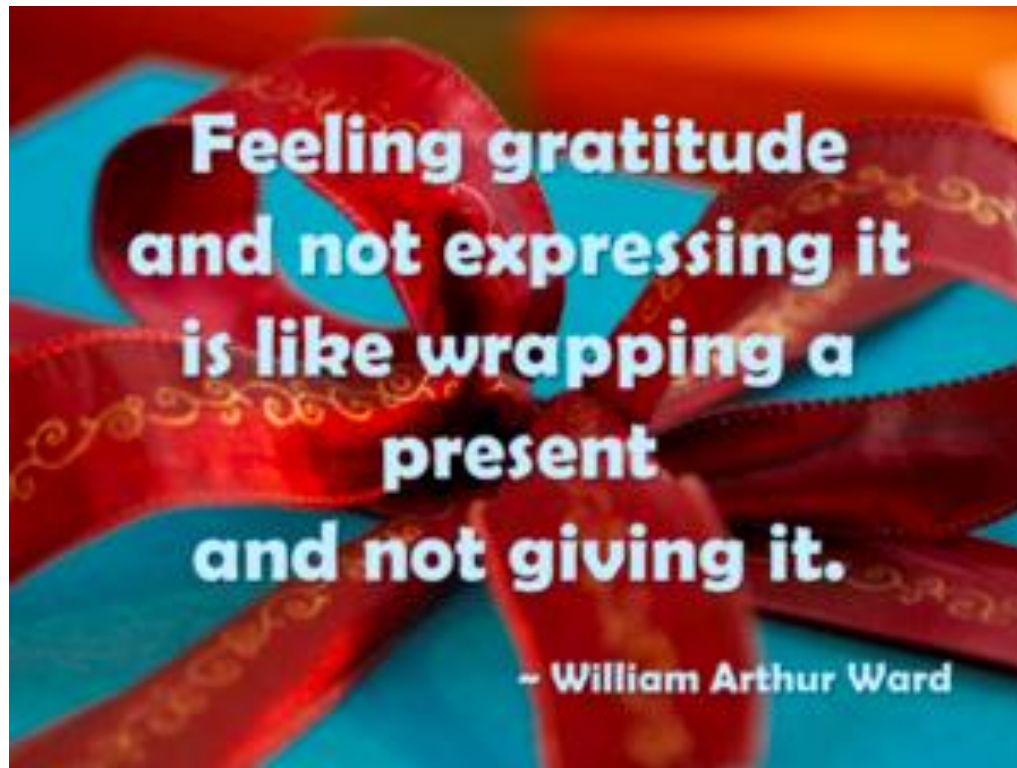


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2: Practise Gratitude



3: Acts of Kindness

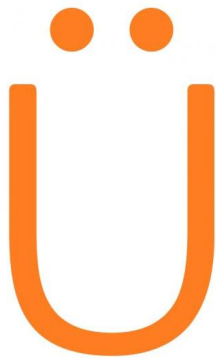


4: Practise Mindfulness



5: Visit The Happiness Institute Website

www.thehappinessinstitute.com



THE HAPPINESS INSTITÜTE

Welcome to The Happiness Institute

Life's too short not to be happy. We've helped thousands of individuals live better lives, and hundreds of teams and organisations flourish, so take advantage of our expertise and experience and find out how to be happier now.

[Find Out Who We Are »](#)



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